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It covers (1) U.S. Federal government documents, especially those from executive branch departments and those from the Congressional branch - - Committees, the U.S. General Accounting Office, and the Congressional Budget Office; (2) policy briefs from major private think tanks, especially those in Washington; and (3) major reports from national professional associations. A few new high quality, high relevance think tank-sponsored books are also listed.

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Reports

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Countering Violent Extremism in the United States. Congressional Research Service, Library of Congress. Jerome P. Bjelopera. May 31, 2012.

In August 2011, the Obama Administration announced its counter-radicalization strategy. It is devised to address the forces that influence some people living in the U.S. to acquire and hold radical or extremist beliefs that may eventually compel them to commit terrorism. This is the first such strategy for the federal government, which calls this effort "combating violent extremism" (CVE). The strategy addresses the radicalization of all types of potential terrorists in the U.S. but focuses on those inspired by Al Qaeda. To further elaborate this strategy, in December 2011 the Administration released its "Strategic Implementation Plan for Empowering Local Partners to Prevent Violent Extremism in the United States" (SIP). The report provides examples of recent Administration CVE activity and examines some of the risks and challenges evident in the SIP's three objectives.

<http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/homesec/R42553.pdf> [PDF format, 33 pages, 672.01 KB].

Item#2

Global Opinion of Obama Slips, International Policies Faulted. Pew Global Attitudes Project. June 13, 2012.

Global approval of President Barack Obama's policies has declined significantly since he first took office, while overall confidence in him and attitudes toward the U.S. have slipped modestly as a consequence. Europeans and Japanese remain largely confident in Obama, while Muslim publics remain largely critical. The overall ratings of the United States have stayed mostly positive. There has been widespread global opposition to the U.S. use of drone strikes.

[Note: contains copyrighted material].

<http://www.pewglobal.org/files/2012/06/Pew-Global-Attitudes-U.S.-Image-Report-FINAL-June-13-2012.pdf> [PDF format, 114 pages, 951.52 KB].

Item#3

The Multilateral Debt Relief Initiative. Congressional Research Service, Library of Congress. Martin A. Weiss. June 11, 2012.

In June 2005, G8 finance ministers proposed the new Multilateral Debt Relief Initiative (MDRI). The MDRI proposes to cancel debts of some of the world's poorest countries owed to the International Monetary Fund, World Bank, and African Development Bank. This report discusses MDRI's implementation and raises some issues regarding debt relief's effectiveness as a form of foreign assistance for possible congressional consideration. It will be updated as events warrant.

<https://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/row/RS22534.pdf> [PDF format, 9 pages, 231.6 KB].

Item#4

Nations in Transit 2012. Freedom House. June 6, 2012.

The report is a comprehensive, comparative study of democratic development in 29 countries from Central Europe to Eurasia. It suggests that the countries that have achieved the greatest democratic success since the Cold War's end are now displaying serious vulnerabilities in their young democratic

systems. Over the past five years, stagnation and backsliding is evident in key governance indicators across the new EU member states and countries of the Balkans. Meanwhile, the failure of virtually any of the countries of Eurasia to shed old governance habits and end monopolies on political and economic power has been one of the greatest disappointments of the past two decades. Reverberations of the Arab Spring in authoritarian states like Belarus, Azerbaijan, and Kazakhstan led to harsher repression of civil society and an increased use of the judiciary as an instrument to punish political opposition.

[Note: contains copyrighted material].

http://www.freedomhouse.org/sites/default/files/Final%20proof_NITbooklet2012%205-24.pdf [PDF format, 28 pages, 5.48 MB].

Item#5

Old Alliance for the New Century: Reinvigorating the U.S.-Thailand Alliance. National Bureau of Asia Research. Catharin Dalpino. June 2012.

The report examines U.S. and Thai perspectives on the U.S.-Thailand alliance with a view to reinvigorating the alliance and, in doing so, strengthening cooperation in the Asia-Pacific region and around the world.

[Note: contains copyrighted material].

http://www.nbr.org/publications/specialreport/pdf/Free/06072012/SR40_US-Thai.pdf [PDF format, 20 pages, 1.19 MB].

Item#6

Older Adults and Internet Use. Kathryn Zickuhr and Mary Madden. Pew Internet & American Life Project. June 6, 2012.

As of April 2012, 53% of American adults age 65 and older use the internet or email. Though these adults are still less likely than all other age groups to use the internet, the latest data represent the first time that half of seniors are going online. After several years of very little growth among this group, these gains are significant. Overall, 82% of all American adults ages 18 and older say they use the internet or email, at least occasionally, and 67% do so on a typical day.

[Note: contains copyrighted material].

http://www.pewinternet.org/~media//Files/Reports/2012/PIP_Older_adults_and_internet_use.pdf [PDF format, 23 pages, 918.99 KB].

Item#7

Partisan Polarization Surges in Bush, Obama Years: Trends in American Values: 1987-2012. Pew Research Center for the People & the Press. June 4, 2012.

As Americans head to the polls this November, their values and basic beliefs are more polarized along partisan lines than at any point in the past 25 years. Unlike in 1987, when this series of surveys began, the values gap between Republicans and Democrats is now greater than gender, age, race or class divides. Overall, there has been much more stability than change across the 48 political values measures

that the Pew Research Center has tracked since 1987. But the average partisan gap has nearly doubled over this 25-year period -- from 10% in 1987 to 18% in the new study.

[Note: contains copyrighted material].

<http://www.people-press.org/files/legacy-pdf/06-04-12%20Values%20Release.pdf> [PDF format, 168 pages, 2.35 MB].

Item#8

Rare Earth Elements: The Global Supply Chain. Congressional Research Service, Library of Congress. Marc Humphries. June 8, 2012.

The concentration of production of rare earth elements (REEs) outside the United States raises the important issue of supply vulnerability. REEs are used for new energy technologies and national security applications. Is the United States vulnerable to supply disruptions of REEs? Are these elements essential to U.S. national security and economic well-being?

<https://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/natsec/R41347.pdf> [PDF format, 31 pages, 619.3 KB].

Item#9

A Securities Transactions Tax: Brief Analytic Overview with Revenue Estimates. Congressional Research Service, Library of Congress. Mark P. Keightley. June 1, 2012.

Policymakers are currently considering taxing certain financial securities transactions. There are two justifications commonly offered for imposing such a tax: (1) it would reduce financial market volatility, and (2) it would be a significant source of revenue. Existing empirical research, however, suggests that volatility could actually increase in response to a securities transactions tax (STT), although the existing research may not be directly applicable to today's environment. Estimates do indicate that an STT could be a significant revenue source if designed properly.

<http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/misc/R42078.pdf> [PDF format, 5 pages, 204.07 KB].

Item#10

Standoff in the South China Sea. YaleGlaobl. Carlyle A. Thayer. June 12, 2012.

The UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, or UNCLOS, designates boundaries for the seas, sorting out nation's rights to fish and exploit other resources, including gas and oil. An offshore island, defined as a naturally formed feature with an economic function, is entitled to a 200-nautical-mile Exclusive Economic Zone; rocks are entitled to 12 nautical miles of territorial waters, but not an exclusive economic zone, explains Thayer. In smaller seas surrounded by a multitude of nations, space is tight with overlapping borders. Such is the case with the South China Sea, with China embroiled in territorial disputes with neighbors for decades. The latest dispute is with the Philippine over Scarborough Shoal, called Huangyan Island by China or Panatag Shoal by the Philippines. Philippines President Benigno Aquino visited the White House seeking US support. Thayer explains that the conflict flared, allowing little time for diplomatic resolution and putting the United States in a difficult position as a treaty ally. The US Senate has yet to ratify the UNCLOS.

[Note: contains copyrighted material].

<http://yaleglobal.yale.edu/content/standoff-south-china-sea> [HTML format, various paging].

Item#11

Time to End Fuel Subsidies? YaleGlobal. Will Hicky. June 7, 2012.

Subsidies distort markets and discourage development of substitutes. Subsidies for fuel are especially problematic, because energy is a backbone of any economy. In terms of energy production and consumption, the world is an uneven playing field in terms of reserves, taxes, regulations, public versus private ownership and income availability, says the author. An abrupt end to fuel subsidies would crush the poorest. With few ready alternatives, fossil fuels are highly inelastic products in economic terms. Wealthy countries purchasing oil often set contract terms that benefit a few, and developing countries that are oil rich arrange subsidies as one benefit for the middle class and poor. Subsidies, even in countries lacking energy resources, contribute to political and economic stability. Ending subsidies, without putting alternative support programs into place, only adds to the ranks of the poor and threatens global security.

[Note: contains copyrighted material].

<http://yaleglobal.yale.edu/content/time-end-fuel-subsidies> [HTML format, various paging].